Message Text

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13
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TAGS: PINR, TSPA, ETEL, AS.
SUBJ: SMALL EARTH-STATION TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT FOR AUSTRALIA.

REF: (A) STATE 4864.
(B) STATE 282811.

1. SUMMARY: IN RESPONSE TO REFTELS, EMBASSY HAS IDENTIFIED SIX POTENTIAL PROJECTS WHICH MIGHT INVOLVE SMALL EARTH-STATION REQUIREMENTS FOR AUSTRALIA IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

2. PROJECTS IDENTIFIED ARE:

(A) THREE GOA AGENCIES- DEPT OF SCIENCE (DOS), CSIRO AND DIVISION OF NATIONAL MAPPING - ARE CONSIDERING ESTABLISHING A LOCAL EARTH STATION TO PROCESS ERTS DATA. AUSTRALIA WILL SOON SEEK NASA'S PERMISSION TO USE NASA'S ORRORAL VALLEY TRACKING STATION'S 30-FT. ANTENNA AND TO ADD TELEMETRY EQUIPMENT AT GOA EXPENSE. THE ENTIRE OPERATION WOULD HAVE TO BE COST REIMBURSEABLE TO NASA. HOWEVER, IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT SURPLUS EQUIP-MENT (E.G. THE FPS16 C-BAND RADAR ANTENNA) AT WOOMERA, FROM WHICH NEARLY ALL OF AUSTRALIA CAN BE SEEN BY ERTS, WOULD BE USED AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE FOR ANY SUCH STATION, REDUCING NEED FOR OVERSEAS PROCUREMENT. THE IMAGING
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TELEMETRY AND IMAGE PROCESSING EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR

SUCH A FACILITY COULD VERY WELL BE PURCHASED FROM THE SAME SOURCES THAT SUPPLIED NASA AND OTHER COUNTRIES HAVING ERTS STATIONS.

(B) DOS EVIDENTLY PLANS TO TIE IN WITH THE JAPANESE METEROLOGICAL SATELLITE TO BE LAUNCHED UNDER GLOBAL ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH PROGRAM (GARP). THIS WOULD INVOLVE TWO LOCAL FACILITIES:

(1) AN AUTOMATIC TURN-AROUND RANGING STATION (TARS) WOULD BE INSTALLED AT NASA FACILITIES AT ORRORAL VALLEY, BUT OPERATED AT GOA EXPENSE. LIKELIHOOD IS THAT GOA WILL PROCURE FROM JAPAN.

(2) A GROUND STATION TO RECEIVE TELEMETRY DATA FROM THE JAPANESE SATELLITE ON AUSTRALIAN AND ANTARCTICA WEATHER IS AN ALMOST CERTAIN PROSPECT. THIS WOULD BE INSTALLED AT WERRIBEE, VIC., ABOUT 20 MILES FROM MELBOURNE AT THE GOA'S BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY APT STATION WHICH RECEIVES DIRECT READOUTS FROM NASA AND NOAA APT WEATHER SATELLITES AND FACSIMILIES OF CLOUD PHOTOS RECEIVED AT OTHER METEOROLOGY BUREAU APT STATIONS AT PERTH, DARWIN, BRISBANE AND SYDNEY. EMBASSY CANNOT PREDICT WHETHER PRO-CUREMENT WOULD BE RESERVED FOR JAPANESE, BUT IT WOULD MOST LIKELY BE OPEN TO OUTSIDE BIDDING.

(C) POSTMASTER GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT (PMG) HAS LONG STUDIED THE POSSIBILITY OF LAUNCHING A POWERFUL GEO-STATIONARY COMMUNICATIONS STAELLITE FOR AUSTRALIA TO PROVIDE BETTER DIRECT COMMUNICATION TO THE OUTBACK COVER PAPUA NEW GUINEA, COCOS ISLANDS, NORFOLK AND LORD HOWE ISLANDS NEW ZEALAND AND ANTARCTICA. THIS WOULD REQUIRE A LARGE SPACECRAFT ANTENNA AND A CENTRAL GROUND TERMINAL WITH 100-FT. DIAMETER ANTENNA. THERE WOULD PROBABLY BE WORLDWIDE BIDDING FOR GROUND STATION EQUIPMENT AND THE SATELLITE. SEVERAL USA COMPANIES HAVE BEEN TRYING TO SELL GOA A COMMSAT FOR YEARS.

(D) AUSTRALIAN DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (ADOD) ALSO UNCLASSIFIED

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REPORTEDLY HOPES TO OBTAIN A CLASSIFIED SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY. ADOD'S REQUIREMENT WOULD PROBABLY BE MET JOINTLY WITH PMG'S (C ABOVE).

(E) THE PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION PARTIES REPORTEDLY HAVE A CONSULTANT STUDYING THE POSSIBILITY OF A SURVEILLANCE SATELLITE CAPABILITY FOR COASTAL PATROL, POLLUTION MONITORING, DISASTER APPLICATIONS AND DEFENSE

USES. THIS WOULD INVOLVE A GEOSTATIONARY SATELLITE AND ERTS-LIKE RESOLUTION. POSSIBILTIY OF EARTH STATION FOR THIS PURPOSE IS REMOTE UNLESS THE PRESENT OR A FUTURE GOA DEVELOPS A SERIOUS INTEREST IN SUCH A CAPABILITY.

(F) DOS IS BEGINNING TO EXPRESS INTEREST IN AN AUSTRALIAN GEOSTATIONARY SATELLITE WITH RESOLUTION EQUAL TO THAT OF ERTS-1 FOR CONTINUOUS MONITORING OF AUSTRALIAN CROPS, POLLUTION, WATER RESOURCES, COASTAL WEATHER, DISASTERS, ETC. THIS INTEREST RESULTS FROM STUDIES MADE BY A GOA SURVEY TEAM WHICH VISITED THE USA, CANADA, AND LATIN AMERICAN ERTS USERS DURING OCTOBER, 1974. SUCH A SATELLITE WOULD REQUIRE A GROUND STATION, AS IN (A) AND (E) ABOVE.

3. THIS SURVEY IS BASED SOLELY ON EMBASSY SOURCES, INCLUDING LOCAL SENIOR NASA REPRESENTATIVE. OBVIOUSLY, ONE SOPHISTICATED SATELLITE MIGHT HANDLE SEVERAL REQUIREMENTS. EMBASSY FORESEES NO RPT NO REQUIREMENT FOR CRYOGENICALLY COOLED PARAMETRIC AMPLIFIERS AND DEMAND ASSIGNMENT EQUIPMENT UNLESS THE GEOSTATIONARY COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE POSSIBILITY BECOMES FIRM.

4. IT IS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS PROBABILITIES ON WHETHER GOA WILL ACTUALLY ACQUIRE ANY OF THESE NEW SATELLITE CAPABILITIES. RECENT DARWIN CYCLONE (I.E. HURRICANE) DISASTER CERTAINLY HAS MADE PUBLIC AND GOA MORE AWARE OF NEED FOR IMPROVED METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM, SO PROSPECTS OF OBTAINING FACILITIES MENTIONED IN PARA 2 (B) HAVE PROBABLY IMPROVED. LABOR GOA HAS, DURING ITS FIRST TWO YEARS IN POWER, SHOWN LITTLE INTEREST IN EXPANDING AUSTRALIA'S PRESENT
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SPACE INVOLVEMENT, WHICH IS NEGLIGIBLE (ESPECIALLY SINCE GOA DROPPED OUT OF ELDO, ESRO AND ESA) EXCEPT FOR ACTING AS HOST COUNTRY FOR SIZEABLE NASA FACILITIES. COST OF ANY AMBITIOUS SATELLITE PROGRAM WOULD DETER GOA, WHICH IS PLEDGED TO HEAVY SOCIAL OUTLAYS. HOWEVER, SCIENCE MINISTER MORRISON ANNOUNCED JANUARY 8 THAT A GOA STUDY ON "SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE SERVICE OF SOCIETY" WILL SHORTLY BE PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT, PRESUMABLY AFTER IT RESUMES ON FEBRUARY 11. WHETHER THIS STUDY WILL PRESAGE SIGNIFICANT PROGRAM INVOLVING SMALL WHOLLY OWNED GOA EARTH STATION REQUIREMENTS IS HARD TO PREDICT NOW.

5. AUSTRALIA-USSR SCIENCE AGREEMENT SIGNED JANUARY 15, 1975, COULD OPEN DOOR AGAIN TO SOVIET PROPOSALS

FOR EARTH STATIONS IN AUSTRALIA FOR "SCIENTIFIC
PURPOSES" AND MIGHY ALSO BRING USSR INTO THE PICTURE
AS A POTENTIAL SATELLITE LAUNCHER AND GROUND STATIONS
EQUIPMENT SUPPLIER.

6. EMBASSY WILL REPORT FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS AS APPRO-
PRIATE.
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